

Claim 32 is representative of the elected invention.

Applicants disagree with the Examiner's position that the pending claims relate to inventions that are patentably distinct. Applicants submit that the pending claims are all directed to a composite having two strata and intermediate transition zone and that examining all of the pending claims together would not be unduly burdensome to the Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,

CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR
JOHNSON KINDNESS^{PLLC}

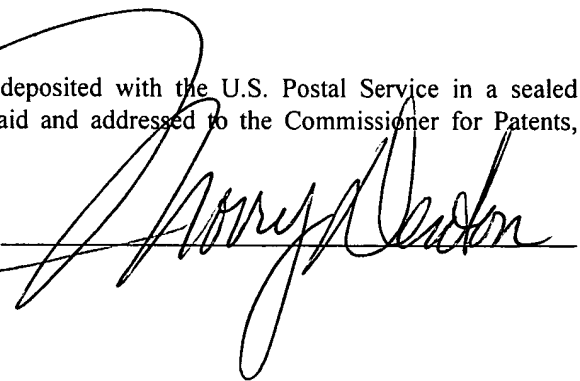


George E. Renzoni, Ph.D.
Registration No. 37,919
Direct Dial No. 206.695.1755

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service in a sealed envelope as first class mail with postage thereon fully prepaid and addressed to the Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on the below date.

Date:

August 22, 2001



GER:md

LAW OFFICES OF
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS^{PLLC}
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100